



The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Establishes National System of Centers for Public Health Preparedness to Strengthen the Front Line Against Health Threats

The health of America's communities hinges on the expertise of the national public health workforce— an estimated 500,000 physicians, nurses, environmental health scientists, health educators, laboratorians, managers and others practicing on the front lines of public health. In response to the 1997 report *Public Health Workforce: An Agenda for the 21st Century* issued by the Health and Human Services Public Health Functions Committee, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiated a national system of Centers for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP) to ensure frontline public health workers have the skills and competencies required to effectively respond to current and emerging health threats.

The Centers (CPHPs) are involved in four key areas: development of competency-based public health practice curricula; technology-mediated learning (e-learning); certification and credentialing; and, applied research and evaluation. The national system currently includes academic, specialty and local exemplar centers.

ACADEMIC CENTERS are cornerstones of the system and link schools of public health, state and local health agencies and other academic and community health partners to foster individual preparedness at the front line. Descriptions of activities to be conducted at the four recently funded centers include:

- **University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health- *Illinois Public Health Preparedness Center***- will develop an introductory Public Health 101 course, to be made available statewide via distance learning; provide online instruction for public health administrator certification and initiate certificate programs for community health improvement specialists and other areas of practice previously identified as priorities in state needs assessment surveys.
 - **University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Public Health -*North Carolina Center for Public Health Preparedness*** - will collaborate with the UNC Center for Infectious Diseases and other partners to implement new training programs around emerging infectious diseases and bioterrorism. Initially, applied research and workforce-training programs will be merged in four demonstration counties in North Carolina. Ultimately the Center will serve five Southeastern states including North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.
 - **University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine -*Northwest Center for Public Health Preparedness*** - will serve as a leader in providing ongoing training in public health preparedness and injury prevention to state and local health professionals in six-states (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming) which represent 31 % of U.S. land mass and covers 3 time zones.
-
-

■ **Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health - Center for Public Health**

Preparedness - in partnership with the New York City Department of Health, which employs over 3000 full time workers, the Center will design a model curriculum for public health practice, using “emergency preparedness” as a framework with special focus on infectious diseases (both newly emerging HIV/TB/STDs), bioterrorism, and other emergency situations. The Center will also begin developing interactive tools for training, communication, and improvement of surveillance and threat assessments.

SPECIALTY CENTERS focus on a topic, professional discipline, core public health competency, practice setting or application of learning technology. The three recently-funded centers are:

■ **Dartmouth College Dartmouth Medical School, Interactive Media Laboratory-Collaboratory in Applied Communications Technology;**

■ **Saint Louis University School of Public Health - Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections;** and,

■ **Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health and Georgetown University Law Center-Center for Law and the Public’s Health - Collaborating Center in Public Health Law.**

LOCAL EXEMPLAR CENTERS or advanced practice sites, are hubs for developing and disseminating best practices at the local level. DeKalb County Board of Health, DeKalb County, Georgia; Monroe County Health Department, Monroe County, New York; and Denver Health, Denver, Colorado are exemplars for the CDC-funded Health Alert Network activity.

CDC’s long-term goal is to use this national system of academic, specialty and local centers to facilitate translating public health science into practice at the front line. The Centers are designed to support CDC’s prevention programs, in general, and bioterrorism/emerging infectious disease, in particular.

~~~~~  
*Individuals seeking information on the Centers for Public Health Preparedness should contact:*

**MAUREEN Y. LICHTVELD, M.D., M.P.H.**  
**Associate Director for Workforce Development**  
**Office of Workforce Development**  
**Public Health Practice Program Office, CDC/**  
**Tel: (770) 488-2480**

---

---